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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 001682

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: A/S FRAZER'S MEETINGS WITH NCP OFFICIALS

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: During a round-table meeting followed by a dinner at the CDA's residence, several leading members of the National Congress Party told A/S Frazer that the GNU has made significant progress in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and pointed to Abyei as the only part of the agreement that has yet to see progress. NCP officials openly discussed secession of South Sudan, a subject rarely raised by Sudanese in official meetings. With respect to Darfur, these officials pledged their support for UNAMID, the humanitarian community, and the UN/AU Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole. NCP officials returned to the GoS's repeated request and the U.S.'s alleged promise for Sudan's removal from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list, and urged that the US consider a "roadmap" to improved relations between the two countries. The officials agreed that a plan is needed for reconciliation with Darfuri IDs and explained why American contractor PAE is unacceptable to the regime, but pledged to "work quietly" with PAE to help UNAMID deploy. END SUMMARY.

PARTICIPANTS

12. (U) The following individuals attended meetings for the National Congress Party:

- Mutriff Siddiq, Undersecretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Yahya Babiker Hussein, Joint National Transition Team
- Said Al-Khatib, Director, Center for Strategic Studies

US Participants:

- A/S Jendayi Frazer
- Special Assistant to the President on Africa Bobby Pittman
- SPG Director Tim Shortly
- CDA Alberto Fernandez
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THE NEXT THREE MONTHS

13. (C) Siddiq opened by thanking A/S Frazer for the U.S.'s support of the CPA, the people of Darfur, and of UNAMID deployment. A/S Frazer emphasized that the next three months will help frame how the next U.S. President perceives Sudan, and added: "I will be frank in telling you that that perception is not positive right now." Al-Khatib replied that the Government of Sudan (GoS) wants to improve the U.S.-Sudanese relationship in the time left in the Bush administration.

ABYEI: "THE ONLY UNFULFILLED PART OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT"

14. (C) Khatib then gave a glowing review of implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the role of the U.S. leading up to its signing, and the international community's contribution to its Assessment and Evaluation Commission. According to Khatib, the Abyei Protocol is the only section of the CPA that remains unfulfilled. He said that currently the issue of Abyei is "out of our hands" as "we have resorted

to arbitration and are waiting for an international body to come out with its findings." Khatib acknowledged that although the two parties may not be "enthusiastic" about the results of arbitration, both groups need to prepare their constituencies for disappointment to avert any disaster upon the release of the findings. Khatib stated that the interim agreement has established a provisional administration and a "Unity Fund" for reconstruction of Abyei. Khatib stressed that Abyei is not just a local or tribal issue, but is important to the country as a whole. Babiker also lauded the formation of the interim administration, the work of the Joint Integrated Units ("an example for all of Sudan,") and the establishment of the Unity Support Fund. Babiker stated that donors have not fulfilled their pledges made at the outset of the CPA, and that this has negatively impacted CPA implementation. CDA Fernandez later reminded Babiker that often the international community has offered support for particular projects (such as outfitting the Joint Integrated Units,) but that the GoS has often rejected these offers. He added that it is regrettable that some of the U.S. assistance for key areas such as Abyei was destroyed in the recent fighting "even though we warned you that the fighting in Abyei was going to break out." He added that although much has been accomplished with the CPA, the NCP and SPLM need to "close the deal" in areas where they have achieved progress and "get some of these issues off the table."

ELECTIONS AND REFERENDUM

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15. (C) Khatib asserted that pending progress in elections, Sudanese need to start discussing the referendum. "It would not be the worst case scenario if the South decided to secede with a clean break," noted Khatib. Continuing, he stated that it is important for Sudan to work with "those who have influence in this region," to make sure that "ugly scenarios" are avoided as the referendum approaches. On elections, Babiker added that the National Electoral Commission is close to "finding a way out of its problems and put into practical terms schedules for 2009." He noted that the important legislation has been passed (specifically noting the Political Parties Law and Electoral Law) and that problems with the Political Parties Council will soon be resolved. CDA Fernandez noted that the GoS's censorship and frequent shutting-down of the Sudanese press is unacceptable and will have a negative impact on elections, as "you cannot have free and fair elections without a free press."

DARFUR

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16. (C) Sadiq said that the GoS views UNAMID deployment as "a challenge for all of us" and thanked the U.S. for its offer of air support. He said that "the majority of the burden" for the slow deployment rests on the U.N. and that the GoS has "honored our commitments" on visa, land, and TCC issues. Sadiq stated that he expects the Humanitarian Communique will be renewed at the end of the month. Sadiq added that banditry and carjacking continues to plague Darfur. He said that the U.S. promise of supporting GoS convoy protection (possibly through WFP) had gone unfulfilled, something that "was never a condition for us, but would have certainly improved our performance." Sadiq said that the Sudan People's Initiative (SPI) has been an attempt to brainstorm and unify Sudanese political forces. He said that the results of the SPI will be released on November 12, and that this initiative will "merge" with the Qatari initiative. Sadiq described the Qatari initiative as an attempt to broaden the DPA and bring other rebel movements to negotiations and promised the GoS's support for UN/AU Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole. While not optimistic that all movements will attend, Sadiq requested U.S. support in publicly welcoming the initiative ("The U.K. and France have welcomed it, but you have not") and putting pressure on the rebels to attend. A/S Frazer later responded that although the SPI appears to be a good initiative, it can also be viewed as a "delay tactic" or "show" and that it is "up to the GoS to prove that there is something there." She said it is important to implement the September 19 deal between Minni

Minnawi and VP Taha in order to show the non-signatories that there are rewards to a peace deal. With respect to Qatar, A/F Frazer said that if it appears as though Qatar has become a credible process, "I will publicly say it." (Note: Later during the dinner at the CDA's residence, when asked what the regime will do to ensure rebel participation at the Doha talks, Siddiq dodged the question by saying that it would be the job of Qatar and the Chief Mediator to engage the rebels, though Siddiq did say that "contacts with rebels have occurred." End note.)

STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM

17. (C) Khatib then changed the topic and said that the U.S. is "long overdue" in taking Sudan off the State Sponsors of Terrorism list. Khatib cited specific examples from May 2003 and 2006 where State Department Officials promised that "within weeks" Sudan would be lifted from the list. A/S Frazer acknowledged that "there was a deal on the table" and an "expectation that something would happen," but that in the interim the conflict in Darfur broke out, and it became legally impossible. A/S Frazer said that the U.S. Congress now requires certification that the conflict in Darfur has been resolved, placing another hurdle in the way of Sudan's removal from the list. Special Assistant to the President for African Affairs, Bobby Pittman, noted that the longer the conflict in Darfur drags on, the more difficult removal from the list becomes. He cited UNAMID deployment as one area where the GOS can make a positive impact in the short term. Babiker urged that the US and Sudan lay out a roadmap for improved relations, defining what would be required to remove Sudan from the list and to remove some or all sanctions. Pittman replied that it will become more difficult over time, partly due to additional legal requirements put in place by Congress. A/F Frazer added that "it will be difficult if not impossible to certify that Sudan is not a state sponsor of terrorism in the time we have left."

EXPLANATION OF OBJECTIONS TO PAE

18. (C) Muttriff Siddiq and Yahya Babiker joined A/S Frazer, CDA and accompanying delegation at dinner at the CDA's residence that evening to discuss bilateral sticking points in a more informal setting. When asked by the CDA to clarify their concerns regarding PAE's operations in Darfur, Siddiq said the GOS finds it unfair that the US will not allow American companies to do business in Sudan, but then makes an exception for an exclusive contract with the UN. Siddiq said that the GoS would like to allow PAE to be the first of many U.S. companies to operate within Sudan, but the GoS must also take into account the pressure that the U.S. exerts on its economy through its sanctions policy. In addition, Siddiq said the GoS has "intelligence concerns," which he intends to discuss with the CDA at a later date, but he added, "We are aware of the transition. We don't want to leave a vacuum, and we will look the other way to allow PAE to finish its work." Later in the dinner, Babiker used less nuanced language to describe Sudan's position on PAE. "A whole company cannot be a security issue, of course, but for us, PAE is more of a symbol of reciprocity," he said, referring to U.S. sanctions on Sudan. Pittman interjected that the GoS could achieve significant progress by working for waivers for specific companies, noting that this would be a faster way to proceed given the complexity of sanctions legislation. Babiker referenced June's negotiations with SE Williamson to complain about the lack of progress, noting "the dialogue went well, even to the extent that a document was ready to be signed, but nothing happened."

AN APPEAL FOR IDPs

19. (C) Siddiq and Babiker listened intently (albeit somewhat stone-faced) while the delegation and CDA made a lengthy appeal that the regime must find a way to solve Darfur by addressing the needs of IDPs, in order to mend the regime's tattered image in the West. When the CDA described Darfur's 2.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a threat

to Sudanese internal security, Siddiq was quick to downplay the GoS's stake in the issue: "The future of Darfuri leadership needs to think clearly; medium to longer-term, it is a challenge to the Darfuris." The delegation cited examples of internal reconciliation and peace-building from their recent visits to Rwanda and eastern Congo, but recognized the challenges. Siddiq said the GoS supports the Qatari initiative in part because of the significant resources that Qatar brings to the table for development and compensation. "One of the incentives of the Qatari initiative is that they will commit themselves to the solution."

SUDAN-CHAD RELATIONS

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¶10. (C) Regarding the relationship between Sudan and Chad, Siddiq expressed disappointment that, "we were supposed to exchange ambassadors tomorrow, but Chad postponed it again." Siddiq said that at bilateral negotiations in Paris in October, the French openly expressed their fear that the GoS would support Chadian rebels for another assault on N'djamena. Siddiq said the Sudanese had proposed that, for the next three months, they would not permit Chadian rebels to launch attacks from Sudanese territory if there were none launched from Chad on Sudan, but Siddiq said the French were cool to the idea. "They think Sudan can control the Chadian rebels but Idriss cannot control the Sudanese rebels."

COMMENT

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¶11. (C) With the exception of Vice President Taha (meeting reported septel) several senior members of the NCP were traveling in the region during A/S Frazer's visit, including Presidential Assistants Nafie ali Nafie and Mustafa Othman Ismail, and NISS chief Salah Ghosh. That was unfortunate because the NCP seemed genuinely interested in showcasing progress they have made and receiving ideas on additional steps. This transparent attempt to appear helpful and proactive is of course framed by the looming possibility of an ICC indictment, but the regime also is concerned about the transition to the new US administration and hopes to lay the groundwork for incentives in return for good behavior in Darfur and on the CPA. It remains to be seen whether the regime is prepared to make significant concessions on Darfur, but if the government does lay out a credible list of options along with an offer of a unilateral cease-fire in advance of the Doha talks and actually sticks to it, it will be easier for the international community to justify heavy pressure on the rebels.

¶12. (C) Khatib's frank discussion of secession represents a change from months ago when GoS and NCP officials were reluctant to openly discuss this controversial issue. This skilled NCP group wisely focused on the CPA in this meeting, highlighting one area where the GoS has made some progress. End comment.

¶13. (U) A/S Frazer's party was able to clear on this cable before transmission.

FERNANDEZ